

ECONOMIC ACTION

The Fuels for Schools (FFS) program in Idaho is a partnership between the State Forester, the Regional Foresters in Regions 1 and 4 of the USDA Forest Service, and the Panhandle Lakes RC&D. The purpose is to expand the use of small-diameter trees and slash removed in fire hazard reduction projects to heat local public schools/buildings and demonstrate the practicality, economy, and positive environmental impact of heating using woody biomass fuels. The program was announced in an open letter to Idaho's public school superintendents in June 2003.

The Forest Service has allocated a total of \$1,190,023 to the Idaho FFS program at this time. The funds include \$50,000 annually to assist IDL in providing staff for program development and grant fund management. The remainder of the funds has been used to help fund the construction of the two Fuels for Schools demonstration projects in Idaho.

On September 30, 2005 Idaho celebrated the grand opening of its first woody biomass fueled demonstration project at Council, Idaho. This 2.7 million dollar energy renovation project included a biomass fueled boiler heating/air cooling system for four school buildings and a greenhouse. Winter 06/07 fuel cost savings are estimated at \$35,000. The project was accomplished using an FFS Grant of \$510,000, QZAB zero interest bonds from the Department of Education and a RAC grant from the Forest Service for construction of the Greenhouse.



Council Superintendent Dalglish examines – FFS Partners assist in the Kellogg project ground breaking the wood chip fuel saving his heating costs.

In September the Kellogg School District was awarded a \$381,000 FFS Grant. On November 1st, the Kellogg School District voters approved an 8.6 million dollar bond package for energy updates of all the school buildings in their district. This project includes installation of a woody biomass fueled heating system for the middle school and administration buildings. The Biomass Boiler is under construction and projected to be operational in August, 2007.

Preliminary Engineering Assessment Studies have been done for county buildings in Bonners Ferry; a complex of the high school, prison and hospital buildings in Orofino; City buildings in Council, a proposed building in McCall, county/city/school buildings in Cascade and school buildings in St. Maries. We are also working on a study of existing heating boilers in Idaho, which hopes to identify possible hubs where expansion of biomass fueled boilers would be feasible.